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Letter from Cal Bedient dated October 23, 1993

Calvin Bedient

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Oct. 23, 1993

Dear Patricia.

Back. Back broken. Broken back.

I talked to Hugh today, via the telephone, and he said he had been in touch with you. Donna sent me a poem far superior to those we workshopped--"In the Perfect Practice of Fatherhood"; no doubt you've seen it. And Susan Bergman is going forward with her plan to adapt Maryette in Ecstasy for opera.

Thanks for the snapshots. I hated the clenched-jaw one of me. Am I really like that? Good God, poor Patricia, poor everyone.

"Auditorium" is pure Goedicke. How you love to juggle a hundred things at once and to keep it all flowing; the syntax keeps being reborn in spurts, just can't be stopped. The exhilaration is unmistakable and contagious, but cut into by how taxing it is to follow the ins and outs and find the links of syntax. I'm still not sure (after several readings) where the clear path lies from "known horizons upended" to "the journey's variations mapped out/beforehand" (or, by the way, how "into" can pass in "striding into their hiking boots"); the image of mirroring muscles, etc., is hard to connect with "the crack of a bat / or a Coca Cola jingle." The image of "electrically / shimmering jellyfish leaping / from scale to scale" is too much for me, out-Disneys Disney and "wild rose of last summer's music" is too nearly trite, especially as a follow-up. I wouldn't object to a period between "world" and "Why not." The run-on and twist-back is jolting without it. I love "the brown timbre of a cough," by the way. And much else. But not "A sigh's melancholy"--fie on all uses of "sigh."

already
Fixed

You come back to the footstep after seeming to forget it entirely in the interest of the music, but, even so, little is made of it, the music swamps it again instantly. You seem torn between writing generally about the moment when the cortex lights up and specifically about its lighting up at the sound of music. I would like to

unbilical screen heartiest

see you hold on to the first even as you develop the second, hold on to it a touch more securely, a fist more -- perhaps by interjecting

something nonmusical on the second page, or introducing developing a nonmusical ~~xx~~ line before launching into music on the first.

I like "shoulder's sheltering bay" a lot, but not the more hackneyed "eyelashes on a smooth cheek," and I think "strings dying away" would have more effect as a line of its own, dropped down rather than sent packing to the left. The poem is big, mightily dynamic and self-modulating.

Patricia, I'm sorry but the O'Keeffe poem still doesn't work for me. Lacks inevitability. Seems written out.

I'm not made to share the speaker's dread of the dark door, not convinced that the sight of it is like a fatal blow, a shock of recognition. Here I feel that Existentialism or Nihilism is working you up to work it up.

I'm getting up a seminar for Monday & am writing in a work stupor. Will leave off. Hope you're free to write, at last, and enjoying it.

Love,

Cal

"Auditorium" is pure Goethe. How you love to juggle a hundred things at once and to keep it all flowing; the syntax keeps being reform in spots, just can't be stopped. The exhilaration is unmistakable and contagious, but out into by how taking it is to follow the ins and outs and find the links of syntax. I'm still not sure (after several readings) where the clear path lies from "downwards upended" to "the journey's variations" mapped out, beforehand" (or, by the way, how "into" can pass in "striking into their hilling boots"; the image of mirroring muscles, etc., is hard to connect with "the track of a bat" or a "Gone with the Wind" The image of "electrically shimmering jellyfish leaping from scale to scale" is too much for me, out-Blaney-Daney and "wild rose of last summer" is too nearly trite, especially as a follow-up. I wouldn't object to a period between "world" and "why not." The turn-on and twist-back is to jolting without it. I love "the brown tinkle of a cough," by the way. And much else. But not "A ship's melancholy" -- lie on all seas of "ship."

You come back to the lookstap after seeming to forget it entirely in the interest of the music, but, even so, little is made of it. The music sways it again instantly. You seem torn between writing generally about the moment when the cortex lights up and specifically about its lighting up at the sound of music. Yet you want the The musical stream, nearest see you hold on to the first even as you develop the second, hold on to it a touch more sedulously, a first more -- perhaps by interesting

something nonmusical on the second page, or introduced developing a nonmusical xx line before launching into music on the first.

I like "shoulder's sheltering bay" a lot, but not the more hackneyed "eyelashes on smooth cheek," and I think "strings dying away" would have more effect as a line of its own, dropped down rather than retroceding to the left. The poem is big, mightily dynamic and self-motivating.

Patricia, I'm sorry but the O'selle poem still doesn't work for me. Lacks inevitability. Seems written out.